

2005 Latvian Crime Statistics

SAFETY AND SECURITY

Europe - Croatia

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The Regional Security Office at the U.S. Embassy Riga reported the following:

The Latvian Police provided the following crime statistics for January to September 2005:

Total Number of Crimes Reported

The total number of crimes reported during this time period increased by a little over 5,000 incidents compared to 2004. It is notable that there was almost a 25% increase in very serious crimes and 6-14% in all other crime categories. The number of very serious crimes is still substantially less than the sum of serious, less serious, and criminal violation crimes combined.

In this same period, the Latvian police report that there were 106 intentional murders in Latvia, down by 54 from the same time period in 2004. On the same note, there were 916 incidents of hooliganism in 2005, 156 less than in 2004. Rapes also dropped by 34 to 221 cases. Conversely, incidents of intentional bodily harm increased by 46 from 2004 to 2005 resulting in 717 such cases. The number of such incidents resulting in death remained relatively stable with only two more or 75 cases reported in 2005. The number of robberies also remained stable at 1718, two more incidents than the year prior. (See chart below)

Intentional murders: 106 (54 less than 2004)

Intentional bodily injuries: 717 (46 more than 2004)

Intentional serious bodily injuries resulting in death: 75 (2 more than 2004)

Robberies: 1718 (2 more than 2004)

Hooliganism: 916 (156 less than 2004)

Rapes: 221 (34 less than 2004)

Criminal Statistics

From January to September 2005, police initiated 33,731 criminal investigations while they maintain 130,830 criminal cases in their working files.

Organized Crime Department (OCD)

It may also be important for American business to know that the Organized Crime Department resolved 687 crimes in 2005; slightly less than the 698 such cases in 2004.

Currently, the Organized Crime Department has 608 additional cases in progress. Accomplishments in 2005 include suspending operations of 60 stable organized crime groups, as well as detaining 75 wanted persons. The OCD also broke down 25 organized groups involved in illegal drug activities and discovered two drug production sites. The OCD resolved 7 cases of human trafficking and 25 crimes in connection with illegal transportation of persons abroad for sexual services in 2005.

Since the OCD detained several organized groups involved with vehicle theft in 2004, there has been a significant drop in stolen vehicles. However, the OCD has also commented on the presence of international vehicle theft groups consisting of Baltic, German and Russian criminals who are replacing the disassembled groups. These groups are also active in Germany and use Latvia as transit channel for stolen vehicles entering Russia.

Extortions and racket crimes have decreased to the point of ceasing in the legal businesses environment. However, such activity still affects those involved with illegal prostitution, bootleg alcohol, and counterfeit tobacco products. A few legalized businesses with criminal pasts have also experienced such threats.

Economic Police Department (EPD)

The Economic Police Department investigates any major crimes dealing with fraud, illegal acquisition of property, and counterfeit documents such as bank cards, copy rights etc... The EPD also investigates smuggling and cyber crimes. Money laundering schemes using Latvian banks were still popular and are committed using loopholes in Latvian legislation. The use of nonexistent offshore companies is a common means of using Latvia as a transit point for money laundering.

Juvenile Crime

The number of crimes committed by underage persons dropped to 2,465 incidents, slightly less than in 2004 year. Of these crimes, 1,427 were theft related and 144 were more serious robberies.

Security Services

The number of security companies registered in Latvia in 2005 rose to 274. Internal security services were offered by 183 companies and there were 30 licensed firearms trading companies and 44 firearm shops.

Crimes Committed by Police Personnel

Of the 101 criminal cases initiated against police officers in 2005, 43 of the officers were officially accused of the crime and 23 were convicted.

Traffic Accidents

The following graph gives an overview of the most recent traffic-related statistics. These numbers indicate that traffic accidents are slowly decreasing. Authorities believe that this phenomenon is due to the harsher fines and increased police presence on the highways.

Year	Accidents	Accident with victims	Number Injured	Number Dead
2004	8152	725	877	81
Jan	4147	397	486	50
Feb	4005	328	391	31
2005	7181	587	771	67
Jan	3640	331	431	47
Feb	3541	256	340	20
2006	4641	412	526	43
Jan	2357	217	276	25
Feb	2284	195	250	18